

CRC QUERI AFFILIATES FORUM

Research Seminar Features Dr. Michael Pignone

Michael Pignone, MD, will be our QUERI research seminar speaker on Tuesday, May 23, 2006 at 2:00 – 3:30 PM EDT. Dr. Pignone will present the “Effect of Mailing Decision Aids and Direct Access to Screening Tests on Colon Cancer Screening Test Completion.” In the study that he will be discussing, Dr. Pignone tested the effectiveness and efficiency of mass mailing a decision aid plus follow-up communications to increase the use of colon cancer screening in primary care.

Besides his interest in colon cancer screening, Dr. Pignone is also interested in physician-patient communication about risk in primary care settings. He has conducted research examining the role of literacy and its effect on health outcomes, including racial/ethnic disparities in patients with chronic illnesses. Additionally, Dr. Pignone has developed and tested interventions to mitigate literacy-related disparities and to improve the use of appropriate preventive services.

Dr. Pignone is an Associate Professor of Internal Medicine at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, Associate Chief of the Division of General Internal Medicine and the Director of the UNC Center for Excellence in Chronic Illness.

Watch for our email invitation coming out in May for the seminar.



QUERI Bids Farewell to Laura Kochevar

Laura Kochevar, PhD, recently left the Minneapolis VAMC for personal and family reasons. As CRC QUERI Research Coordinator, a nationally renowned implementation expert, and a well respected and accomplished Investigator, Laura has made many tremendous contributions to the QUERI and VA HSR&D over the years. Those of us who had the good fortune to work with Laura will miss her intellect, her dry wit, and her kind heart.

Melissa Partin (Associate Director of the Minneapolis Center of Excellence in Health Services Research, current CRC QUERI Executive Committee Member, and collaborator on the original application for the CRC QUERI program), has assumed the role of Research Coordinator for the Colorectal Cancer QUERI.

The CRC QUERI remains committed to supporting the projects with which Laura was involved. We have transferred responsibility for her various active projects to other CCDOR Investigators and are working to make sure that no momentum is lost during this transition period.

Affiliates Forum

is a quarterly publication of the CRC QUERI

Research Coordinator: Melissa Partin, PhD

Clinical Coordinators: Dawn Provenzale, MD

John Bond, MD

Implementation Research Coordinator: Adam Powell, PhD

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Get to Know Our Affiliates *George L. Jackson, PhD*

George L. Jackson Ph.D., MHA is a Research Health Scientist and epidemiologist with the Center for Health Services Research in Primary Care and Epidemiologic Research and Information Center at the Durham VA Medical Center. He recently completed his postdoctoral fellowship with the Division of General Internal Medicine at Duke University and Durham VA and is a recent recipient of an HSR&D Merit Review Entry Program award (career development program for non-clinician Ph.D. scientists). Dr. Jackson received a Bachelor of Science in Public Health in health policy and administration, Master of Healthcare Administration, and Ph.D. in epidemiology from the School of Public Health at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Dr. Jackson's research combines methods of epidemiology and health services research to evaluate the provision of care for patients with chronic illnesses. Specifically, he concentrates on how to organize primary and specialty care to encourage proactive care that focuses on prevention of complications and encourages self-management.

The focus of Dr. Jackson's research has been diabetes and colorectal cancer. He has been a participant in the Colorectal Cancer Care Collaborative (C4) and has been actively involved in the development of processes that will be implemented in Phase II of the collaborative, which focuses on colorectal cancer treatment. He is the current Project Director for the measurement section of Phase II of C4, which is being conducted under the leadership of Dr. Dawn Provenza, CRC-QUERI Co-Clinical Coordinator.



While Phase I of the C4 collaborative is focusing on improving processes and outcomes related to screening and diagnosis, the objective of Phase II will be to increase the utilization and timeliness of guideline concordant treatment. Additionally, the collaborative aims to determine how hospital clinics can utilize colorectal cancer screening and treatment information to make improvements in patient care. As one example, IT capability can be utilized to produce a system allowing for comparable results across facilities and conditions, which will improve the generalizability and validity of information. Thus, the C4 collaborative will enhance systems for establishing treatment related measures and goals, extracting and abstracting treatment information, analyzing data, and reporting results to practicing clinicians and administrators so care can be improved. The development of a Cancer Care Quality Measurement System that can be used across the VA and other federal healthcare systems is a primary goal of the CRC-QUERI C4 effort. In addition to quality improvement, research efforts will benefit from a better understanding of how to extract, manage, and analyze the vast amount of information in the VA electronic medical record.

The lessons learned from C4 about the organization of care can be translated across types of cancer and also potentially improve services across different chronic illnesses. In this way, the work of the C4 collaborative is especially relevant to the QUERI mission to promote the translation of research discoveries and innovations into patient care and systems improvements to reduce the incidence, late detection, suffering and mortality from colorectal cancers among veterans.

Meet the New CRC QUERI Research Coordinator



Melissa Partin, Ph.D. will be taking over as Research Coordinator for the CRC QUERI. Dr. Partin is a behavioral scientist with a Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. She joined the Center for Chronic Disease Outcomes Research in 1998 and has been Associate Director at this VA HSR&D Center of Excellence for the past three years. Dr. Partin is an established VA HSR&D investigator who has been an active participant in the CRC QUERI since its inception, most recently as a member of the Executive Committee. She is currently PI on a CRC QUERI-related IIR to assess patient barriers to colorectal cancer screening and has been PI on 7 other federally funded research grants. She has considerable

experience in implementation research and her primary research area of interest is the development and evaluation of interventions to promote best practices in cancer prevention and control. Please join us in welcoming Dr. Partin in her new CRC QUERI role as Research Coordinator.

Workshop on Colorectal Cancer Care Collaborative Presented at HSR&D National Meeting



The 24th annual HSR&D Service National Meeting was held February 15-17, 2006 in Arlington, VA. Among the sessions was a workshop presented on the opportunities and lessons learned as the CRC-QUERI, Office of Quality and Performance, Advanced Clinical Access initiative, and other partners have developed and implemented the Colorectal Cancer Care Collaborative (C4). The processes of inte-

grating the skills of partner organizations, measuring CRC related care and outcomes, balancing supply and demand for services, meeting the needs of facilities, and developing ongoing quality improvement and measurement systems were discussed. Presenters included: George Jackson, Ph.D., MHA (Project Director for C4 Phase II measurement process), Dede Ordin, MD, MPH (Director of VA Quality Improvement), Laura Kochevar, Ph.D. (CRC-QUERI Research Coordinator), Renee Parlier, RN, MPA (Director of VA ACA initiative), Jeff Murawsky, MD (VISN 12 Chief Medical Officer and C4 Collaborative Director), and Dawn Provenzale, MD, MS (CRC-QUERI Co-Clinical Coordinator). This group represented the hard work of the C4 Planning Committee, Advisory Committee, Coaches, project staff, and teams.

Article submitted by George L. Jackson, PhD, MHA, Research Health Scientist, Durham VAMC

Second Clinician Letter to be Distributed

In June, the CRC QUERI will distribute the second Clinician Letter to QUERI clinicians. The topic of the second letter will pertain to inappropriate FOBTs.

Our wish is that the Letter Series will be timely and pertinent. Therefore, we need your suggestions as to topics of interest. Please send your input to Nancy Koets at Nancy.Koets@va.gov.

